

RECOGNIZING DYKE MARSH  
WILDLIFE PRESERVE

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 6, 2009*

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 701, honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

Fifty years ago, commercial dredging and dumping operations threatened the very existence of Dyke Marsh. In 1959, Congress designated Dyke Marsh as a protected wetland habitat, allowing it today to provide a vital habitat for over 6,500 species of animals and plants, and serve as one of the national capital area's most cherished wetland and wildlife preserves.

I am proud to have taken part in the designation of Dyke Marsh. The best times of my life were hunting and fishing with my dad and, later in life, with my children. I want to ensure others are able to enjoy the outdoors in that same meaningful way.

This anniversary reminds me of the great times John Saylor, Henry Reuss and I shared while working on environmental and conservation legislation together. They were great friends and legislators, and I am proud of what we were able to accomplish. John was wise to have once said: 'We are a great people because we have been successful in developing and using our marvelous natural resources; but, also, we Americans are the people we are largely because we have had the influence of the wilderness on our lives.'

I am also reminded of a quote by another great leader, Winston Churchill. Churchill, as you know, enjoyed the occasional drink. One day he was meeting with a group of women who were offended by his consumption of alcohol. They said 'Mr. Churchill, if you lined the walls of your office with the alcohol you have consumed, it would be up to here.' Churchill looked up, thought for a moment, looked at the ladies and said, 'So much to do, so little time.' We should be proud of the good our work towards conservation has done, but remember we have more to do.

The Gentleman from Virginia, Mr. MORAN, is to be commended for his hard work in protecting Dyke Marsh and for the good work he has done from his perch in the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior. Important conservation programs are better off because of his wisdom and diligence.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the hard work of the Friends of Dyke Marsh. This organization, currently under the leadership of Glenda Booth, has done a great job of protecting this beautiful space and getting the story of Dyke Marsh out. Friends of Dyke Marsh is an outstanding advocacy organization and they have much of which to be proud.

I urge all my colleagues to rise and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. STEVE KING**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 7, 2009*

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, on roll-call No. 754, I was unable to reach the House floor to cast my vote before the vote was closed.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

GOVERNORS OF MISSISSIPPI AND  
NEBRASKA EXPRESS CONCERNS  
WITH UNFUNDED MANDATES IN  
HEALTH REFORM

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 7, 2009*

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express concerns regarding health reform proposals which would create unfunded state mandates. Legislation currently before the House would dramatically expand the Medicaid program and place over \$35 billion in new liabilities on state budgets over the next ten years. In addition, these proposals would expand the federal government's role in administering Medicaid, which would severely handcuff states' ability to run their own programs and preempt state authority to manage Medicaid eligibility and benefits.

Over the last several weeks, governors have expressed concerns over these proposals. I would like to submit for the RECORD the following letters from the governors of Mississippi and Nebraska:

AUGUST 6, 2009.

Hon. GREGG HARPER,  
Cannon HOB,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HARPER: As Congress debates healthcare reform, I want to raise a few issues of concern with the policies being considered in both House and Senate bills. Healthcare reform is truly a bipartisan issue; after all, Republicans and Democrats understand that our healthcare system faces significant challenges—from steadily increasing medical costs to confusing insurance provisions. As the national debate continues, it is important that everyone realizes the severe impact the proposed legislation would have on states like Mississippi.

As Governor, I am particularly concerned about the direction the Senate and House are taking in regards to Medicaid expansion. Instead of discussing policies to reform a broken system, the debate in Congress has shifted to finding ways to fund an expanded Medicaid program at the state level. At the end of the day, both the Senate and House proposals are unfunded mandates, which, for states like Mississippi, would result in burdensome and costly changes to the system.

For example, when we talk about sharing the cost of an expanded Medicaid program, Mississippi would pay another \$333 million annually under a larger program covering up to 150 percent below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). A Medicaid program covering up to 133 percent FPL expansion would cost an extra \$297 million. In many states, funding the current Medicaid programs robs other critical programs. The same is true for us. Each year we struggle to cover our Med-

icaid expenses while providing for essential services including public education and public safety.

While there has been some discussion at the federal level to assist states in paying for this expansion, my staff learned last week that the Senate Finance Committee is proposing to cap the amount of federal money distributed to the states to pay for this expansion at \$40 billion over 10 years. Estimates show the cost of expanding the Medicaid system to all states at the lowest level, or 133 percent FPL, is \$30 billion per year. At 133 percent FPL, states would be saddled with Medicaid expansion costs in the second year of expansion.

These projections are overwhelming as Mississippi, like all states, continues to grapple with budget realities. Our General Fund Revenue collections for July 2009 are 11.27 percent below our estimate. Compared to the prior year, collections for this July are 21.43 percent or \$56.3 million below what was collected in July 2008. During Fiscal Year 2009, Mississippi's revenue was \$390 million short of the revenue estimate, causing most of state government, except for education and Medicaid, to take approximately a 6 percent cut in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

Our Fiscal Year 2010 budget included \$523 million in stimulus funds; otherwise, we would have faced even more significant cuts. It will take our state years to catch up, and that's without a \$297 million or \$333 million Medicaid state-share increase.

Further, the proposed healthcare reform legislation also includes numerous tax increases to finance significant expansions of government-run healthcare. Different versions of the House legislation incorporate a payroll tax on small businesses. Although the recent House Energy and Commerce Committee agreement included an 8 percent payroll tax for small businesses with an annual payroll of \$500,000, previous versions taxed small businesses with a payroll of \$250,000.

This tax will do nothing more than punish wage and job growth, especially when you consider that the tax rate increases as the size of payroll increases. According to the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), such employer mandates could cost 1.6 million jobs with more than 1 million of those jobs lost in the small business sector. That means higher taxes for Mississippians, since 96.7 percent of our employers are small businesses. In addition, the Senate HELP Committee proposal requires employers to offer health coverage to their employees and contribute at least 60 percent of the premium cost or pay \$750 for each employee that is not offered coverage.

Language in the proposed legislation also would mandate an individual to purchase health insurance and, should he be unable to afford such coverage, he'll be slapped with a 2.5 percent additional income tax for the coverage. But the proposed legislation goes even further, taxing higher income individuals beginning at \$280,000 and families at \$350,000 on a sliding scale.

This language generates a massive tax increase on high income filers, more than half of whom are small business owners already being taxed if they do not provide health insurance to their employees. A tax increase in the middle of a recession, with unemployment rising, is not the answer.

Besides increasing taxes, the House bill cuts Medicare nearly \$500 billion. These cuts include reductions to Medicare providers and hospitals, while gutting Medicare Advantage by \$150 billion to \$160 billion. Admittedly, I am baffled as to why Congress would propose slicing funding for a program that our seniors support and that provides for their health and well-being.